

Council Business Meeting

June 15, 2021

Agenda Item	Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission Work Plan and Social Equity and Racial Justice Resolution Council Discussion and Action Identification	
From	Adam Hanks	City Manager Pro Tem
Contact	adam@ashland.or.us ; (541) 552-2046	

SUMMARY

Councilor DuQuenne and Graham requested for the Council to discuss and approve a six-month work plan for the Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission. This agenda item is also to discuss and give an update on the Social Equity and Racial Justice Resolution.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Resolution 2021-01 Section 1.B: Proclaim Juneteenth as an annual day of municipal commemoration and partner with communities of color and other local organizations to celebrate African American/Black culture on this day annually

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

Resolution No. 2020-15 was discussed and approved by Council at the [July 7, 2020 Business Meeting](#). At the same meeting, Councilor Graham requested to place this item on reoccurring agendas and Council agreed. Resolution No. 2021-01 was approved and replaced Resolution No. 2020-15 at the [January 19, 2021 Business Meeting](#).

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Councilors DuQuenne and Graham have provided the attached workplan to guide the Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission for the next six months. Task areas identified include:

- Work with community partners to develop a joint training, incident response, and community acknowledgement program that help residents and business owners address the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate progress.
- Work with Southern Oregon University to conduct a research project on the actions that have been undertaken by the City of Ashland and other community anchor institutions that have directly targeted and impacted residents of marginalized groups (positively or negatively).
- Review and provide feedback on the City's efforts to integrate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion into its human resources policies and procedures and to provide training on these issues, as well as cultural competency and implicit bias, for the Council and staff.
- Review and provide feedback to the City on master planning efforts underway now and in the future related to how those plans impact our ability to reach our social equity and racial justice goals.

FISCAL IMPACTS

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

1. I move to approve the Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission workplan.
2. I move to approve the Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission workplan with the following changes...

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Councilor DuQuenne and Graham’s Workplan Guidance for the Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission

Attachment 2: Social Equity and Racial Justice Statement Tracking List

Attachment 3: Resolution No. 2021-01 A Resolution Declaring the City of Ashland's Commitment to Social Equity and Racial Justice and Repealing Resolution No. 2020-15

Workplan Guidance for Social Equity and Racial Justice Coalition

In order to provide the new commission with both direction and flexibility, the Ashland City Council has identified the following task areas for the commission to focus on initially:

1. Work with community partners to develop a joint training, incident response, and community acknowledgement program that help residents and business owners address the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate progress. The goal is to make it easier for residents and businesses to access training, acknowledge those who are taking positive action, and provide a response program so that people have somewhere to go for help if they have a negative experience.
2. Work with Southern Oregon University to conduct a research project on the actions that have been undertaken by the City of Ashland and other community anchor institutions that have directly targeted and impacted residents of marginalized groups (positively or negatively). This project will allow us to fully understand and teach our local history while influencing future decisions regarding which historical figures to raise up with public art, naming of facilities, etc. It can also influence other decisions that might be taken to make amends for actions taken by community leaders in the past. This commission might develop recommendations for such restorative action in the future.
3. Review and provide feedback on the City's efforts to integrate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion into its human resources policies and procedures and to provide training on these issues, as well as cultural competency and implicit bias, for the council and staff.
4. Review and provide feedback to the City on master planning efforts underway now and in the future related to how those plans impact our ability to reach our social equity and racial justice goals.

Identifying these initial focus areas will allow the Commission to move immediately to take action on social equity and racial justice in ways that assist the City with its current goals, while providing the flexibility that all commissions have to propose to Council the elements of their upcoming workplans.

Council invites the Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission to return to Council in six months with their progress toward these initial focus points, their recommendations regarding the future priority of these and other projects, and their proposed workplan for the following twelve months. Our goal is to provide the Commission with enough direction to focus its initial efforts while maintaining its ability to identify and work to address other issues of social equity and/or racial justice concern it deems important and worthy of commission action, as all other commissions do.

**Resolution No. 2021-01 (formerly 2020-15) Social Equity and Racial Justice
Statement Tracking Sheet**



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>Section 1.A. Designate Social Equity and Racial Justice as a Value Service in the City of Ashland's strategic planning process, which will provide an opportunity for focused and sustained attention within the City's planning, management, and policy structure.</p>	
<p>Section 1.B. Proclaim Juneteenth as an annual day of municipal commemoration and partner with communities of color and other local organizations to celebrate African American/Black culture on this day annually.</p>	
<p>Section 1.C. Advocate at the state and federal levels for policy reform that includes: a searchable database of officers sanctioned for excessive use of force and other misconduct; a national data collection program to determine the number of people killed or injured by police officers tracked by race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics; limiting the transfer of military equipment to local jurisdictions; providing more extensive training for police officers regarding de-escalation, intrinsic bias, and procedural justice; and assisting people with mental health or addiction issues which have interactions with law enforcement.</p>	
<p>Section 1.D. Work in the near term as a "Committee of the Whole" to move these efforts forward by assigning tasks outlined in this resolution to individual staff and councilors and regularly reporting them back to Council. Simultaneously, a more formal process and timeline is underway that includes regular progress reports to the Council.</p>	
<p>Section 2.A. Support the Ashland Police Department is taking a more active role in on-campus conversations about racial justice at Southern Oregon University and developing engagement events to help residents understand APD's policies regarding the use of force and other relevant issues.</p>	<p>Tighe O'Meara, Police Chief</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: APD is in the middle of analyzing its community engagement effort. APD has routinely accepted the SOU Football Coach's invitation to meet with his student-athletes and will continue to do so. Chief O'Meara appears as a criminology guest speaker a few times a year, as requested by the professors. A community town hall is being planned for later in the year to engage BIPOC and concerned community members on how recent events and requests have informed APD policies.</p>	

**Resolution No. 2021-01 (formerly 2020-15) Social Equity and Racial Justice
Statement Tracking Sheet**



Item:	Assigned to:
Section 2.B. Strengthen our cultural competency and intrinsic bias training program for members of the City Council and City Staff.	Tina Gray, Human Resources Director
<p>1/12/2021 - Staff Progress Update:</p> <p>EDI Statement – The first step in creating change that will resonate in the organization is to adopt an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement. The statement will set the tone for our existing staff and inform those seeking employment or services with the City of our organization's values. The EDI statement will be prominently displayed on the City's website, HR Materials, and used internally to reinforce our workplace culture's inclusivity. Staff developed a draft statement and invited all employees to provide feedback and suggest edits to the EDI Statement. The collaboration resulted in the revised statement below:</p> <p><i>"The City of Ashland is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We acknowledge, celebrate, and support our differences across all spectrums, including but not limited to gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, or socioeconomic status. We will provide a work environment of respect that values diversity in background, opinions, and perspectives. We commit to furthering equity in our work and our community by continually challenging bias, eliminating structural racism, and actively recruiting and promoting a diverse workforce. We will become allies to those with less access and take responsibility for making changes that will help others be successful. Respect for one another is at the core of everything we do."</i></p> <p>Outreach & Engagement – The plan is to engage the community and our employees with a survey about how we can improve equity, diversion, and inclusion – Staff hopes to post the survey by the end of January or early February. Input from the survey will be reviewed and used to support internal initiatives.</p> <p>Staff will also request volunteer participation within the City organization to participate on an EDI Committee. The Committee will have a role in proactively advancing our EDI Statement and providing a venue to bring issues to the table that can be sensitive or uncomfortable to discuss. Many employees have expressed a desire to participate. There is a lot of internal expertise and willingness to force change within our employee population. Passionate employees can be internal champions that can create a shift in workplace culture rather than a top-down approach.</p> <p>Training/Policies/New Hire Orientation – This will include continually training staff and keeping equity at the forefront to permeate our organization at all levels. Managers and Supervisors will receive additional training, so they model EDI for those they supervise and to promote inclusive practices in their everyday work. Job Descriptions are being updated, making EDI an essential job function for all positions in the City. As time allows, City policies will be reviewed and updated with gender-neutral terminology. New hires need to start their career with the City clearly understanding and embracing EDI principles.</p> <p>Staff is planning a training and will invite voluntary Council participation in an interactive exercise called "Walk a mile in their shoes." Course Description Attached. We hope to schedule the training for</p>	

**Resolution No. 2021-01 (formerly 2020-15) Social Equity and Racial Justice
Statement Tracking Sheet**



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>April 2021 based on CIS staff availability. Additional training to educate staff will be provided throughout the year.</p> <p>Partnerships -Continue collaborative partnerships within the community and region that focus on EDI to help us learn and grow and bring back new ideas to the City for implementation.</p>	
<p>Section 2.C. Display Black Lives Matter signs at City-owned locations to offer visible and immediate support for racial justice advocates in our community.</p>	<p>Bill Molnar, Community Development Director David Lohman, City Attorney Councilor Tonya Graham</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: Community Development Department staff coordinates permit requirements with Public Works to install signs on City-owned facilities/buildings. Existing building signage will need to be evaluated to ensure new sign installation complies with the size, location, and materials standards described in the City's Sign Code. Additionally, the City Attorney will advise on a legal framework to support the Council's desired signage content.</p>	
<p>10/6 Staff Progress Update: Government-sanctioned displays or messages supporting particular public policies or viewpoints are allowed only in limited circumstances without also allowing displays or messages to support other, possibly opposing views. To respond to Sections 2.C and 2.H of Council's Resolution on Social Equity and Racial Justice in a way that fits within those limited circumstances, staff requests Council input on the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the displays referenced in Sections 2.C and 2.H envisioned intended to be temporary or permanent? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If temporary, what timeframe is intended? b. If temporary, are the referenced displays intended to be tied to a one-time event or a recurring event such as an annual celebration? 2. What steps should the City take to involve the community, including BIPOC members of the community, in planning such displays? 3. Could the referenced displays serve their intended purpose while also being an addition to the City's Public Art Collection (perhaps similar to the Peace Wall in front of the Ashland Public Library)? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note: The process for making an addition to the Public Art Collection is prescribed in AMC 2.29; it generally includes a request for proposals, a Selection Panel distinct from the Public Arts Commission, and recommendations to the City Council from the Selection Panel and the Public Arts Commission based on artistic merit and the artist's experience in producing public art. 4. Is establishing the referenced displays feasible with existing staff and funding? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What should be the dollar limit for such an effort, and which budget funds should bear that expense? b. Might a private fundraising effort be feasible? Might a private donation (as occurred with the Guanajuato Mural along the Calle) be feasible? c. Should a project manager be designated to head up the effort? Could such a project manager be a volunteer from the community, as opposed to City staff? 	
<p>Section 2.D. Continue and enhance our support of the annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.</p>	

**Resolution No. 2021-01 (formerly 2020-15) Social Equity and Racial Justice
Statement Tracking Sheet**



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>Section 2.E. Connect with Southern Oregon University and its students to better understand all college students' experience, but particularly students of color, in the City of Ashland as a first step toward improving that experience. Through this process, the City will help all local college students understand the City's ideals and expectations regarding respect for all people.</p>	<p>Adam Hanks, City Manager Pro Tem</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: APD has routinely accepted the SOU Football Coach's invitation to meet with his student-athletes and will continue to do so. Chief O'Meara appears as a criminology guest speaker a few times a year, as requested by the professors.</p> <p>HR will continue collaborative partnerships within the community and region that focus on EDI to help us learn and grow and bring back new ideas to the City for implementation. HR is participating on a Committee with SOU, but COVID-19 impacted activities on that commission. When meetings resume, staff will continue to hold a seat and represent the City of Ashland on the Committee and report progress back to the Council.</p> <p>City Manager meets with SOU President monthly through the Ashland Coalition and will engage President Schott on this concept in upcoming meetings and provide additional information as available</p>	
<p>Section 2.F. Work with community partners to develop training, incident response, and community acknowledgment programs that help residents and business owners address the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate progress.</p>	
<p>Section 2.G. Work with Jackson County and neighboring communities to develop a program that will provide trained mental health professionals for instances where the Ashland Police Department is called upon to serve the needs of people who are suffering from mental health issues and/or addiction.</p>	<p>Tighe O'Meara, Police Chief Councilor Tonya Graham</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: APD hosted two crisis intervention (CI) workers from Jackson County Mental Health (JCMH) on August 12, 2020. The workers went on patrol with the downtown officers and made several contacts with community members who are chronically in need of mental health assistance. APD is starting to explore a possible relationship with JCMH to make available more robust CI resources. APD is also beginning to examine the feasibility of standing up its own 24/7 CI program using vetted and trained local practitioners.</p>	
<p>Section 2.H. Determine the feasibility of a mural project to provide a mode of artistic expression of our community's commitment to making meaningful, visible, and ongoing progress on social equity and racial justice issues.</p>	<p>Bill Molnar, Community Development Director</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: Creation and installation of murals, visible from a public right-of-way, are subject to the process and guidelines established by Council Resolution 2016-29 - A RESOLUTION</p>	

**Resolution No. 2021-01 (formerly 2020-15) Social Equity and Racial Justice
Statement Tracking Sheet**



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>ADOPTING GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION AND INSTALLATION OF MURALS. The Public Arts Commission (PAC) has established criteria for approval of wall murals, a list of information describing the mural design application, and a process for presentation and review, with final approval by the City Council. Staff will schedule this item on a future PAC agenda to get input on how best to proceed, including identifying and considering possible mural locations for Council consideration.</p>	
<p>Section 2.I. Request a proactive review of the policies that pertain to the standard process of investigating incidents where deadly force is used in Jackson County.</p>	<p>Tighe O'Meara, Police Chief Councilor Tonya Graham</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: The Jackson County Deadly Force was revisited by the Jackson County District Attorney's office and approved by all municipalities and accepted by the State. The plan calls for maximum transparency and outside agency involvement to ensure all aspects of a deadly force encounter are scrutinized. There is likely limited ability to impact change on this. If APD officers were involved in a deadly force incident, best practices would mandate an outside agency to handle the investigation. All other agencies in Jackson County have signed on to this plan, as has APD, so even if we reviewed it and wanted change, the other agencies would still adhere to the plan as currently presented.</p>	
<p>Section 2.J. Review recruiting/hiring practices to address implicit bias with input from leaders of local diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.</p>	<p>Tina Gray, Human Resources Director</p>
<p>1/12/2021 Staff Progress Update: Recruitment & Selection – HR has implemented a blind application review feature for several recruitments successfully. We have removed fields in the application that could reveal irrelevant details about an applicant and/or socioeconomic status to reduce the opportunity for unconscious bias in application review. By eliminating unnecessary variables in the application process, we can focus on the specific knowledge, skills, and experience related to the minimum job qualifications. We have established pre-requisite training required for anyone serving on an interview panel for the City. The training is available on-line and speaks to the many positives of having a diverse workforce while educating panelists about bias and how it can unconsciously influence hiring decisions. Promotional Opportunities – HR is continuing work on internal promotional processes to ensure they are competitive and fair with transparent scoring.</p>	
<p>Section 2.K. Renew the effort with Indigenous leaders in the community to find a solution to Dead Indian Memorial Road's renaming.</p>	<p>Scott Fleury, Public Works Director Adam Hanks, City Manager Pro Tem</p>

1 **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01**

2 A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE CITY OF ASHLAND’S COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL
3 EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE AND REPEALING RESOLUTION NO 2020-15

4 **RECITALS:**

5 A. The Ashland City Council recognizes that the United States’ shameful history of slavery and
6 over 150 years of systemic racism post-slavery has created a legacy of unequal opportunities and
7 higher risk of violence for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States.
8 The mere presence of this reality should be a concern and top priority for all Americans who
9 value the goal of equality for all people; and

10 B. The Ashland City Council recognizes that intrinsic bias is the foundation on which systemic,
11 institutionalized racism is built and that the work to unwrap and disassemble that bias is work
12 that we must do both as individuals and as a community; and

13 C. The Ashland City Council recognizes that, in spite of the values of equality held by the
14 majority of City of Ashland residents, Ashland has not yet reached the point where it is a
15 comfortable place for people of color to live, work, own a business, and raise their children; and

16 D. The Ashland City Council recognizes that local leaders who have been advocating for racial
17 justice and social equity on behalf of their families and communities cannot and should not be
18 asked to shoulder this work alone. There is work to be done by all Ashland residents, including
19 this Council; and

20 E. We find ourselves in a moment in time similar to, but in many ways distinct from, previous
21 incidents of police brutality that have happened in various locations across our country. What we
22 know from the past is that too often outrage tapers off over time, and there is strong momentum
23 to go back to business as usual. We must use this historic moment to commit to doing the
24 sustained work over time necessary to create a different future for Ashland – a future that is more
25 diverse and authentically welcoming to all who live and visit here; and

26 F. The City of Ashland’s commitment to progress on these issues has been visible through the
27 following efforts which are ongoing:

- 28 1. The Ashland Police Department (APD) is committed to engaging all members of the
29 community in an equitable, professional, and compassionate manner. For years the
30 officers of APD have trained in implicit bias, procedural justice, de-escalation and on
other best practices. APD knows, however, that these are not boxes to be checked and

1 never re-visited, but rather that this work is never-ending and that it needs constant
2 attention and updating. To that end APD is dedicated to continuing its work with
3 community members and groups to move forward in collaboration, while strengthening
4 relationships and fostering mutual understanding.

5 2. The City of Ashland has also begun adapting its employment recruitment and hiring
6 processes and recognizes that more needs to be done to eliminate bias in this area.

7 3. Mayor John Stromberg has signed Ashland on to the Obama Foundation’s “Eight
8 Can’t Wait” program, and Ashland Police Chief Tighe O’Meara has completed a review
9 and revision process related to that commitment; and

10 G. While the City of Ashland has made progress, our community, values, and constitutional
11 ideals call us to be more than we have been and to move forward with purpose in order to
12 provide immediate support for advocacy efforts while putting in place the elements necessary for
13 long-term, systemic change.

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, OREGON,**
15 **RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

16 SECTION 1. The Ashland City Council commits to the following:

17 A. Designate Social Equity and Racial Justice as a Value Service in the City of
18 Ashland’s strategic planning process, which will provide an opportunity for focused and
19 sustained attention within the City’s planning, management, and policy structure.

20 B. Proclaim Juneteenth as an annual day of municipal commemoration and partner with
21 communities of color and other local organizations to celebrate African American/Black
22 culture on this day annually.

23 C. Advocate at the state and federal levels for policy reform that includes: a searchable
24 database of officers sanctioned for excessive use of force and other misconduct; a
25 national data collection program to determine the number of people killed or injured by
26 police officers tracked by race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics;
27 limiting the transfer of military equipment to local jurisdictions; providing more
28 extensive training for police officers regarding de-escalation, intrinsic bias, and
29 procedural justice; and assisting people with mental health or addiction issues who have
30 interactions with law enforcement.

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D. Work in the near term as a “Committee of the Whole” to move these efforts forward by assigning tasks outlined in this resolution to individual staff and councilors and reporting back to Council on a regular basis while a more formal process and timeline is developed that includes regular progress reports to Council.

SECTION 2. Moving forward, the City of Ashland will:

A. Support the Ashland Police Department in taking a more active role in on-campus conversations about racial justice at Southern Oregon University and in developing engagement events to help local residents understand APD’s policies regarding use of force and other relevant issues.

B. Strengthen our cultural competency and intrinsic bias training program for members of the City Council and City Staff.

C. Display Black Lives Matter signs at City-owned locations to offer visible and immediate support for racial justice advocates in our community.

D. Continue and enhance our support of the annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday.

E. Connect with Southern Oregon University and its students to better understand the experience of all college students, but particularly students of color, in the City of Ashland as a first step toward improving that experience. Through this process, the City will help all local college students understand the City’s ideals and expectations regarding respect for all people.

F. Work with community partners to develop training, incident response, and community acknowledgement programs that help residents and business owners address the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate progress.

G. Work with Jackson County and neighboring communities to develop a program that will provide trained mental health professionals for instances where the Ashland Police Department is called upon to serve the needs of people who are suffering from mental health issues and/or addiction.

- 1 H. Determine the feasibility of a mural project to provide a mode of artistic expression of
- 2 our community's commitment to making meaningful, visible, and ongoing progress on
- 3 issues of social equity and racial justice.
- 4 I. Request a proactive review of the policies that pertain to the standard process of
- 5 investigating incidents where deadly force is used in Jackson County.
- 6 J. Review recruiting/hiring practices to address implicit bias with input from leaders of
- 7 local diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.
- 8 K. Renew the effort with Indigenous leaders in the community to find a solution to the
- 9 renaming of Dead Indian Memorial Road.
- 10 L. Periodically provide updates on local legal cases with social equity and racial justice
- 11 implications
- 12 M. Review and update this resolution as necessary to ensure accurate and relevant
- 13 objectives, policies and actions are defined and accomplished

14 SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

15 ADOPTED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2021.

16 ATTEST:

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20 Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder

21 SIGNED and APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2021.

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24 _____
25 Julie Akins, Mayor

26 Reviewed as to form:
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29 _____
30 David H. Lohman, City Attorney